

**LEGISLATIVE SERVICES AGENCY
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FISCAL IMPACT STATEMENT

LS 6820

BILL NUMBER: SB 280

NOTE PREPARED: Dec 29, 2005

BILL AMENDED:

SUBJECT: Domestic Relations Counseling User Fees.

FIRST AUTHOR: Sen. Zakas

BILL STATUS: As Introduced

FIRST SPONSOR:

FUNDS AFFECTED: ☒ **GENERAL**
☒ **DEDICATED**
☐ **FEDERAL**

IMPACT: Local

Summary of Legislation: This bill authorizes a county to adopt an ordinance under which: (1) a domestic relations counseling bureau user fee may be collected from a party who uses Domestic Relations Counseling Bureau services; and (2) a Domestic Relations Counseling Bureau Fund is established to receive the user fee.

The bill authorizes a Domestic Relations Counseling Bureau to offer certain additional services. It permits a court to establish a schedule of user fees for the use of domestic relations counseling bureau services if the county adopts a domestic relations counseling bureau ordinance.

Effective Date: July 1, 2006.

Explanation of State Expenditures:

Explanation of State Revenues:

Explanation of Local Expenditures: See *Explanation of Local Revenues*.

Explanation of Local Revenues: *Ordinance Adoption:* This bill allows a county fiscal body to adopt an ordinance to create a Domestic Relations Counseling Bureau Fund. The bill also allows a county fiscal body to permit a court to establish and assess a Domestic Relations Counseling Bureau fee. Fees collected would be deposited in the Fund. The county fiscal body shall appropriate money from the Domestic Relations Counseling Bureau Fund to support the Domestic Relations Counseling Bureau. The expenses of administering the Fund shall be paid from the money in the Fund. Money in the Fund does not revert to the county's general

fund at the end of the fiscal year.

Adoption of Rules: If a county fiscal body has adopted an ordinance to create a Domestic Relations Counseling Bureau Fund, the court is responsible for adopting rules which dictate a schedule of Domestic Relations Counseling Bureau user fees.

Additional Duties: The bill amends statute to add responsibilities to Domestic Relations Counseling Bureaus. The Bureaus would be responsible for providing screening, counseling, and mediation to participants when ordered by the court. Expenditures would increase for Bureaus providing the services themselves. Actual increases would be dependent on the number of persons ordered to participate in screening, counseling, and mediation services and the cost to provide the individual services.

Background Information on Domestic Relations Counseling Bureaus: There are currently 3 Domestic Relations Counseling Bureaus in the state of Indiana. They are located in Marion, Lake, and St. Joseph Counties. Of the three, Marion and Lake currently charge fees on a sliding scale. Fees collected range from \$35 to \$75 (one-time fee) in Lake County and \$1-\$85 (per hour) in Marion County. Lake County reports that the majority of fees are waived for persons receiving services due to inability to pay.

The Bureaus themselves vary in services provided (resource and referral providers or actual service providers); program participants served (court-ordered persons only or court-ordered persons and walk-ins); and county appropriation amounts (Bureaus are supported through county general fund appropriations and fees collected).

State Agencies Affected:

Local Agencies Affected: Courts; Domestic Relations Counseling Bureaus.

Information Sources: Honorable Michael Gotsch, St. Joseph County Domestic Relations Counseling Bureau; Merrilee Frey, Lake County Domestic Relations Counseling Bureau; www.impcl.org/cgi-bin/irnfull.pl?MAIN0233A.

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